

Chapter-V
Levels of
Infrastructural Facilities

CHAPTER – V

LEVELS OF INFRASTRUCTURAL FACILITIES

V.1 INTRODUCTION:

Infrastructural development shows the quality of population in any given region. The infrastructure is the totality of the structure of road network, communication and transmission of information, health and other amenities. The development of a region depends upon the development of agriculture and industry but such a development cannot take place without simultaneous development of infrastructure. The rural areas of India are stagnant and lagging behind the urban areas because of inadequacy of infrastructure. The pace of development is stimulated with better infrastructural facilities.

V.2. TRANSPORT

The linkage of urban centres is possible due to the development of road, rail, waterways and airways. Transportation line acts as the lifeline of urban development without which the concentration of population and economic progress of the urban areas are not possible. The efficiency and ease of transport and its capacity to generate high level of urbanization should be emphasized. The transport lines act as conveyers of trade, commerce and mutual understanding and innovation between places have their roles properly played in localization of facilities, concentration of specialized population and they in turn led to the location and growth of urban centres in the region.

The district of Koch Bihar is endowed with a variety of agricultural pursuits, so an efficient transport system is essential for their proper utilization and speedy development. Since transport is basic prerequisite, no specific elaboration is required here to highlight the role played by it in any region's socio-economic change. The close connection between the development of various sectors of economy and a good transport network is, in fact, well established. The movement of goods, people and services, and also the message from one part to another part would have not been possible had there been no evolution of transport and communication system. It can safely be stated that the transport and communication is as important for the smooth functioning of a region's economy as the 'circulation of blood through human body'. Against this background, the existing transport and communication system of Koch Bihar district covering its quantitative and qualitative dimensions has been attempted here.

THE EXISTING SYSTEM

The principal means of transport and communication of this district was only along the rivers in the early days. Since the merger of the Koch Bihar State, roads and railway have

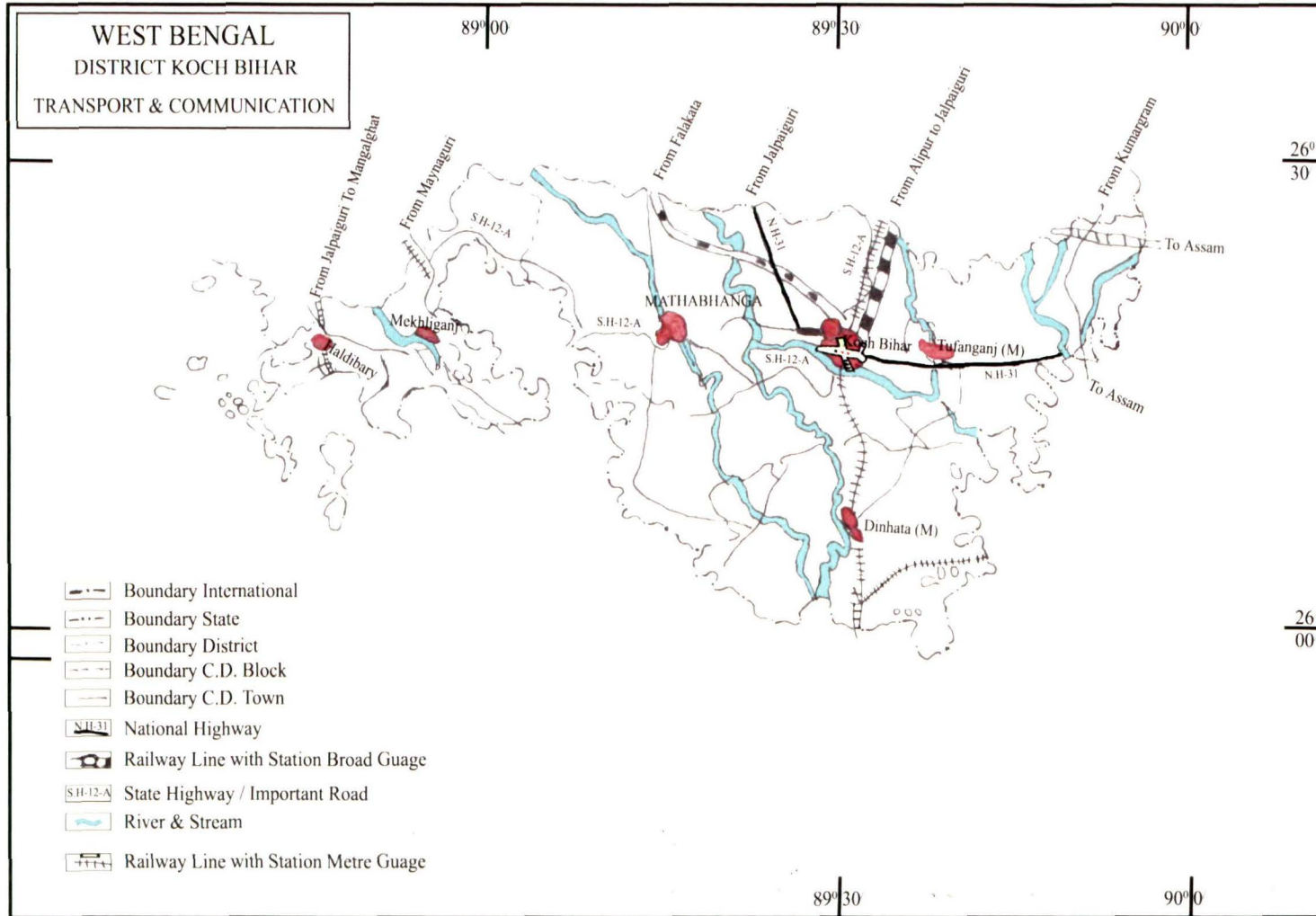


Fig. No. V.1

become the principal means of transport and communication in the district. Although Koch Bihar is still much lagging behind in transport and communication compared to other parts or districts of West Bengal in India, it is now served by all the modern means of transportation viz. roads, railways, and airway. They are contributing more or less towards internal growth by consolidating the places located in various corners. They help in bringing villages and towns and the remote and more developed regions closer to one another and enhancing productivity, widening new stimuli to economic activity. Under these circumstances, it seems relevant to make an investigation of the present transport system along with the causes or factors operating against its expansion.

ROAD TRANSPORT

Road development has considerably progressed in almost every part of the district. All Sub-divisional towns, police station, the present Municipal and census towns are well connected by a fine network of all types of roads. So the major portion of the passenger traffic is carried on through public and private transport.

LENGTH OF ROADS

At present in this district, 1028 kilometres length roads are maintained by P.W.D. of which 723 kms are surfaced and 305 kms are unsurfaced. On the other hand, 1145 kms roads are maintained by Zilla Parishad including 125 kms surfaced and 1020 kms unsurfaced roads. Out of 1028 kms length roads maintained by P.W.D., 56 Kms are National Highway and 96 kms are State Highway and 357 kms are district roads.

In this district, the total length of roads maintained by the municipality is 378.18 Kilometers (9.1 Sq.Kms road density) of which 286.61 kms are surfaced and 91.57 kms are unsurfaced roads. Here the length of surfaced roads is much higher than the unsurfaced roads. Among different municipal towns of this district the length of roads is highest in Cooch Behar municipal town (135.04 kms) having 16.3 Sq. Kms road density followed by Dinhata (67 kms) having 14.7 Sq.Kms road density, Tufanganj (55.96 kms) having 14.9 Sq. Kms road density, Mathabhanga (54.99 kms) having 16.3 Sq. Kms road density and Haldibari (43.15 kms) having only 5.7 Sq. Kms road density. Mekhliganj Municipality has the lowest length of roads comprising only 22.04 kms road length and 29.8 Sq. Kms road density maintained by the municipality.

Among all municipal towns of this district Haldibari municipal town has minimum or lowest surfaced roads comprising only 16.40 Kms compared to unsurfaced roads (26.75 Kms). Cooch Behar municipal town has the highest amount of surfaced roads (108.09 Kms) followed by Tufanganj (52.06 Kms), Dinhata (49.00 Kms) and Mathabhanga (43.02 Kms).

Table – V.1
Length of Roads Maintained by Municipalities 2006

Sl. No.	Name of the Town	Area of the Town (Sq.Kms)	Surfaced Road Lenth(Kms)	Un-surfaced Road Lenth(Kms)	Total Road length (Kms)	Road Density (Sq.Kms)
1	Cooch Behar	8.29	108.09	26.95	135.04	16.3
2	Dinhata	4.55	49.00	18.00	67.00	14.7
3	Mathabhanga	3.37	43.02	11.97	54.99	16.3
4	Tufanganj	3.75	52.06	3.90	55.96	14.9
5	Mekhliganj	3.88	18.04	4.00	22.04	5.7
6	Haldibari	1.45	16.40	26.75	43.15	29.8
	Total	41.34	286.61	91.57	378.18	9.1

Today (2004) the total number of registered motor vehicles in this district is 28625 of which 1752 goods vehicles, 3614 motor car jeeps, 19643 motor cycles and scooter, 634 taxi and contract carriage, 80 auto rickshaw, 1174 mini bus, 2265 stage carriage, 260 tractor and trailor and 203 other vehicles. Among these types of motor vehicles number of motor cycles and scooters are the highest in number (19643) followed by motor car and jeeps (3614), stage carriages (2265) and goods vehicles (1752). But in different towns of this district auto rickshaw service is minimum in number (only 80). North Bengal State Transport Corporation, Mini motor, Truck and Taxi Employee Union or Private Motor Syndicate has maintained this type of vehicles in this district.

NORTH BENGAL STATE TRANSPORT CORPORATION

After the merger of Koch Bihar State with the state of West Bengal from 1st January 1950, the Government of West Bengal took over control of transport under the Home (Transport) Development. The North Bengal State Transport Corporation was subsequently established with the participation of the Railway Board with effect from April 15th 1960. N.B.S.T.C. with its headquarters at Cooch Behar serves the five North Bengal districts viz. Koch Bihar, Jalpaiguri, Darjeeling, Malda and West Dinajpur to operate bus service

FUNCTIONS OF N.B.S.T.C.

- To promote development of road transport in the areas comprising Koch Bihar and other four districts of North Bengal and also the outer places.
- To co-ordinate the road transport with railway transport in the said areas.
- To expand and improve facilities for road transport in the said areas and provide an efficient and economical system of road transport services therein.
- The buses are usually located in several depots and there are five depots in the district viz. Cooch Behar, Dinhata, Mathabhanga and Tufanganj. There are no

depots in Haldibari and Mekhliganj town. These five depots accommodate about 200 buses in the district which are only passenger carriage buses.

Table –V.2
Bus Accommodation and Passenger Carries in
Different Depots of Koch Bihar District

Sl. No.	Name of the Depot	Actual Accommodation (Approx)	Passenger Carriage Vehicles
1	Cooch Behar	125	72
2	Dinhata	35	30
3	Mathabhanga	20	15
4	Tufanganj	20	15
	Total	200	132

COOCH BEHAR DEPOT :

In Koch Bihar, there are two depots which have actual accommodation of 125 buses and operate 72 buses including limited, local or general or ordinary, special and super to all towns and their hinterland of this district. Apart from the local passenger carriages services, these depots also operate long distance service of 746 kms to Kolkata, 720 kms to Barasat, 720 kms to Burdwan, 666 kms to Mujaffarpur, 488 kms to Naogaon, 444 kms to Tejpur, 444 kms to Balurghat, 648 kms to Nabadweep, 634 kms to Seuri, 380 kms to Gouhati, 209 kms to Siliguri etc.

Table –V.3
Long Distance Bus Service from Koch Bihar Depot

Sl. No.	Name of the Agency/City	Distance (Km.)	Number of Buses
1	Kolkata	746	5
2	Barasat	720	1
3	Burdwan	720	1
4	Mujaffarpur	666	1
5	Naogaon	488	1
6	Tejpur	444	1
7	Nabadweep	648	1
8	Seuri	634	1
9	Maldah	410	1
10	Balurghat	444	1
11	Siliguri	209	5
12	Guahati	380	1

DINHATA DEPOT :

This depot actual accommodation of 35 buses and operates 30 buses including limited, local, special and super to its hinterland and to some of the towns of this district. Besides, in this depot there are approximately 5 long distance bus services of 771 kms to Kolkata, 690 kms to Majaffarpur, 191 kms to Siliguri, 115 kms to Dhubri.

Table – V.4
Long Distance Bus Service from Dinhata Depot

Sl. No.	Name of the Agency/City	Distance (Km)	Number of Buses
1	Kolkata	771	1
2	Mujaffarpur	690	1
3	Siliguri	191	2
4	Dhubri	115	1

MATHABHANGA DEPOT :

This depot has actual accommodation of 20 buses and operates 5 buses including limited, special and super to its hinterland and to some of the towns of this district. Apart from this local bus service it also operates 10 long distance bus services of 700 kms to Kolkata (2), 581 kms to Mazaffarpur (1), 428 kms to Farakka (1), 130 kms to Siliguri (4) and 81 kms to Jaigaon (1).

Table–V.5
Long Distance Bus Service from Mathabhanga Depot

Sl. No.	Name of the Agency/City	Distance (Km)	Number of Buses
1	Kolkata	700	2
2	Mujaffarpur	581	1
3	Farakka	428	1
4	Siliguri	130	4
5	Jaigaon	81	2

TUFANGANJ DEPOT:

This depot has actual accommodation of 20 buses and operates 5 buses including special and super to its hinterland and Cooch Behar(district headquarters) and also operates long distance services covering a maximum distance of 665 kms to Ranaghat (1), 184 kms to Siliguri (3) and 45 kms to Alipurduar (2).

Table – V.6
Long Distance Bus Service from Tufanganj Depot

Sl. No.	Name of the Agency/City	Distance (Km)	Number of Buses
1	Ranaghat	665	1
2	Siliguri	184	3
3	Alipurduar	45	2

PASSENGERS CARRIED DAILY BY N.B.S.T.C :

The number of passengers carried daily by the N.B.S.T.C. has remained constant over the years in spite of the increase in the fleet strength of the N.B.S.T.C. The private buses and the mini buses have been responsible for reducing the ever-increasing traveling passengers load. This in spite of increased in the number of daily commuters in different towns of this district there has been no reflection of the same in the passengers served daily by N.B.S.T.C. which has remained at an almost same level.

Table –V.7
Daily Passenger Carried From Different Depots of Koch Bihar District

Sl. No.	Name of the Town / Depot	Number of Passengers served	Total Kms. runs	Earnings (Rs)
1	Cooch Behar	80000	6500	75000
2	Dinhata	4000	3500	25000
3	Mathabhanga	2500	2500	10000
4	Tufanganj	3000	3500	15000

PERSPECTIVE :

North Bengal State Transport Corporation introduced many new type of bus services like the special buses, limited buses, trailers, super express, double decker buses etc. and executive services. The double decker buses which were found to be unsuitable from the economic perspective were withdrawn from its service. The N.B.S.T.C. also introduced other long distance services like Rocket service. Other buses introduced in order to meet the demand of the passengers and to reduce safe load during the peak hours. The limited stop services of the N.B.S.T.C. were also withdrawn with the introduction of new type of services like mini bus services. In order to stay in the competition with the private bus service, the North Bengal State Transport Corporation took the following measures:

- Introduction of long distance services like Rocket Services
- Introduction of S.B.S.T.C.
- Withdrawal of Double deckers.
- Withdrawal of limited bus service
- Introduction of new mini bus service
- Introduction of some package tour programmes

PRIVATE MINI BUSES :

Private mini maxi-taxi and matador buses started plying in the streets of this district towards the end of the nineteenth century. It took nearly 25 years for the service to

be regularized on an organized basis through the various routes in and around the district. Today all the private bus and mini operators within different towns of this district are organized into Bus Syndicate or Route Committees. The bus Syndicate is an association of the bus owners which looks after the interest of the operators and organizes the bus and mini services. It supervises the operation of these services by forming one or more route committees which are in turn responsible for maintaining regularity of service. Buses are owned by individual route permit holders and a good deal of individualism prevails amongst them.

In the district 200 private buses and mini, maxi ply in different routes of this district of which 37 are buses, 83 are mini and 80 are maxi. A bus has the capacity to carry 70 passengers (seated 35 and standing 35) and make 1 to 5 trips a day. A bus is kept from 5 to 10 hours in the run. Among six municipal towns of this district, the highest number of private mini buses ply in Cooch Behar comprising 69 buses including 17 buses, 28 mini and 24 maxi followed by Dinhata(38) comprising 15 buses ,8 mini 15 maxi respectively; Tufanganj (29) and Mathabhanga (25 buses). Haldibari (20) and Mekhliganj (19) have lowest number of buses compared to other towns of this district.

Table – V.8
Number of Private Mini Buses Plying in
Different Towns of Koch Bihar District

Sl. No.	Name of the Town	Type of Buses run			Total
		Bus	Mini	Maxi	
1	Cooch Behar	17	28	24	69
2	Dinhata	5	15	15	35
3	Mathabhanga	3	12	5	20
4	Tufanganj	3	12	14	29
5	Mekhliganj	3	8	8	19
6	Haldibari	3	8	9	20

While comparing the service provided by N.B.S.T.C. / A.S.T.C. / Private bus and mini buses, maximum roads of this district are served by State and private buses and almost 65% bus services are covered by these two types of passenger services and the rest are covered by maxi-taxi motors and Sumo. But in this district the Auto-Rickshaw services is minimum in number. These types of vehicles are used duly in Cooch Behar town but it is more or less absent in all other towns. So in Cooch Behar the highest number of state and private buses, mini, taxi and Tata Sumo are operated and it is well connected with all other towns of this district.

RAIL TRANSPORT :

In the district of Koch Bihar, the rail transport is not recent origin. The Maharajas administration opened a railway from Lalmonirhat to Cooch Behar and from Cooch

Behar to Jayanti at the foot of the Himalayas in the Jalpaiguri district. This railway enters the district at Gitaldaha at the southern point and runs northward along almost the entire breadth from south to north. In the western sector Haldibari and in the southern sector Dinhata are connected by railways. Changrabandha is also served by railway in Mekhliganj police station. Very recent the construction of railway is already started in Tufanganj.

Today Cooch Behar has been connected with the New Jalpaiguri through New Cooch Behar Rail Station by a broad gauge rail routes. Thus making one's journey from Cooch Behar to Kolkata which is quite comfortable .It is important to note that train service viz. Tista Torsha Express, Kamrup Express, Kanchanjagha Exp, Uttarbanga Exp, Saraighat Exp, Kanchan-kanya Exp, B.G. Passenger, Abodh Assam Exp, Dadar Exp, Bangalore Exp, Trivandrum Exp, Cochin Exp, Rajdhani Exp, etc. are boarding at New Cooch Behar Rail Station.

AIR TRANSPORT :

During the Maharaja's administration, there were small air strips in Cooch Behar, Tufanganj, Dinhata, Mathabhanga and Mekhliganj intended to take his personal planes. Since 1950, the Cooch Behar air strip 1 has been enlarged and improved to a good landing ground. Scheduled passenger services have been appeared by the Director General of Civil Aviation, yet Cooch Behar was a busy airport handling almost the entire expensive inward trade of the district and large quantities of tobacco, Jute and Tea from Cooch Behar itself and the western Doors of Jalpaiguri. But for a long time Cooch Behar air strips have already been stopped due to some of the problems and causes. After a long time very recently the airport is newly renovated and hopes it will start its air trips as early as possible.

V. 3. POST AND TELEGRAPH

The linkage of urban centres and the habitats is possible due to the development of post and telegraph services. Post and telegraph line act as the media for urban development without which the communications of population and socio-cultural and economic progress of the urban areas are not possible. It can ease the linkage of urban people and represent an interaction between each other in the system with every other people or place. Therefore, the efficiency and ease access of post and telecommunication and its capacity generate high level of urbanization. Post and telegraph lines act as a conveyor of trade, commerce, service, education and mutual understanding and innovation between the urban people and urban places.

POSTAL SERVICES: The postal administration of Koch Bihar district is under Jalpaiguri Postal Division. In Cooch Behar municipal town there is a Head Post Office of this district and under this Head Post Office there are some branch post office and sub-post offices in different towns of this district. In general in this district there are 293 post office and sub-post offices of which 34 offices have telegraph arrangement. On the other

hand, among six municipal towns of this district, there are 23 post offices including District Head Post Office and 12 combined post offices where both post and telegraph arrangement are present.

Table – V.9
Post and Telegraph offices in the Urban Areas of this District

Sl. No.	Name of the Town/Municipality	Post Office	Telegraph Office	Combined Office
1	Mekhliganj	1	—	1
2	Haldibari	1	—	1
3	Mathabhanga	1	—	1
4	Cooch Behar	10	1	6
5	Tufanganj	5	—	1
6	Dinhata	5	—	2
	Total (Urban)	23	1	12
	Total District	293	1	34

Source: (i) P.M.G. West Bengal Circle
(ii) Chief General Manager, Telecom (B.S.N.L.), West Bengal Circle
(iii) Supdt. of Post Offices, Koch Bihar.

In Koch Bihar, there are ten (10) sub-post offices including six (6) combined offices and five (5) in Tufanganj including one combined office, five (5) in Dinhata including two (2) combined offices. In all other towns viz. Mekhliganj, Haldibari and Mathabhanga have every one combined post and telegraph office.

Table – V.10
Distribution of Post Offices in Different
Towns by Population in Koch Bihar District

Sl. No.	Name of the Town/Municipality	Population	Number of Post Office	Population Serves/ post office
1	Mekhliganj	10,833	1	10,833
2	Haldibari	13,170	1	13,170
3	Mathabhanga	21,110	2	10555
4	Cooch Behar	76,812	10	7681
5	Tufanganj	19,293	5	3858
6	Dinhata	34,303	5	6860
	Total (Urban)	2,25,506	23	9804

Table – V.11

Distribution of Post Office Based on Population by Category

Sl. No.	Category	Population serves/post office	Number of Towns	Name of the Towns
1	Maximum Population serves	Above 10,000	3	Mathabhanga, Haldibari, Mekhliganj
2	Medium Population serves	6,000--- 10,000	2	Cooch Behar , Dinhata
3	Lowest Population serves	Below 6000	1	Tufanganj

DISTRIBUTION OF POST OFFICES BASED ON POPULATION

On the basis of number of population serves / post office (*Table V.11*) all post office of six municipal towns is classified into three following categories

➤ *Maximum Population Serves*: Mathabhanga, Mekhliganj and Haldibari municipal towns are included in this type of maximum population serves/ post office. In Mathabhanga one post office serves 10555 populations, in Haldibari and Mekhliganj it is calculated as 13170 and 10833 respectively. There is a maximum pressure of postal service on these three towns on view point of population size compared to all other municipal towns of Koch Bihar district.

➤ *Medium Population Serves* : Cooch Behar and Dinhata municipal towns are included in this category of minimum post office with medium number of population serves. In Cooch Behar municipal town, one post office serves 7681 populations which is 6860 in Dinhata municipal town. In these two towns the pressure of postal service is moderate.

➤ *Lowest Population serves* : Tufanganj municipal town is included in this type of low number of population serves/ post office. In Tufanganj municipal town one post office serves 3858 population, i.e., there is no pressure of postal services from the point of view of population size. Actually we find in Tufanganj maximum number of post office with minimum number of postal services.

All types of communication facilities regarding serving letters, parcel, money order, telegram; postal order, stamps, revenue stamps, all types of savings in different schemes, Pension scheme, Certificate issue of Kishan Bikash, N.S.C. etc. are available in different post offices in this district.

But in the very recent years, the postal services face some crucial problems in different aspects e.g.

- Today's people are less interested about time-dependended postal service in case of sending letters, parcel and business and official document. They are more interested on

private courier service and D.T.D.C. for quick service. In that case postal stamps are not required.

- Peoples are less interested on traditional system of postal service.
- Emergence of different co-operative society, short term oriented small savings account, daily account of retail and wholesale businessman under different commercial and Gamin Banks and private societies create problem in the post office for public savings.
- The serviceable people are not interested to open savings in post office instead of Banks and due to the lowering of the interest rate of N.S.C. and other certificate so the post offices of this district face problems.

V.4. TELECOMMUNICATIONS

In the continuing process of overall growth in Telecom service coupled with modernization, BSNL network in Koch Bihar district has reached 43047 working telephone connections as on today while equipped capacity has grown to 59720. All the 40 telephone Exchanges in the network are electronic and interconnected by reliable media. As on date of Telephone District are served by 800 lines new technology Trunk Automatic Exchanges and a C-3 Type Internet node working at Koch Bihar. IVRS based computerized Fault Repair System is operational in Cooch Behar, Dinhat, Mathbhanga and Mekhliganj. Telephone bills can be paid through Uttar Banga Kshetria Gamin Bank apart from the Customer Service Centre. Almost all the villages have been connected with landline and with wireless in Local Loop (WLL) technology.

Mobile services at major towns are in operation and Umbrella coverage of the whole district by GSM has been planned.

INTRODUCTION OF CELLULAR MOBILE SERVICES : The cellular mobile service was introduced in the district of Koch Bihar from the year 2002 both for post paid having brand name of 'Cell One' and Pre-paid having a brand name 'Excel'. The equipments are the best in the world and are extending the state of art services to consumers better than nearest best. In this district, there are installed 7 numbers of BTS at Koch Bihar Telephone Exchange, Koch Bihar M/W Station, which is capable of extending services in the highways and towns on the way.

The Customer Service Centre at the Koch Bihar Telephone Exchange takes care of the customer services, facility provisioning, bill collection and redresses of complaints for post paid and prepaid consumers. It is to be noted that the BSNL will continuously change the tariff and the relevant parameters to suit the consumers' requirements.

KOCH BIHAR TELECOM DISTRICT : The Koch Bihar Telecom District has launched telecom services through 40 Telephone Exchanges of which seven exchanges are present

Table –V.12
Distribution of Telephone Exchange in the Urban Areas of Koch Bihar District

Sl. No.	Name of the Town	Status	Exchange Abbre-viation	Exchange With Number
1	Cooch Behar	M.T.	COB	1(222/223/224/225/226/227/228/229/230/231)
2	Dinhata	M.T.	DTA	1(255/256/257/258/259)
3	Mathbhanga	M.T.	MTG	1(255/256/257)
4	Tufanganj	M.T.	TFG	1(244/245/246)
5	Mekhliganj	M.T.	MKG	1(255)
6	Khagrabari	C.T.	KGB	1(240/241)
7	Guriahati	C.T.	GHT	1(233)

Source: Telephone Directory, Koch Bihar Telecom District, West Bengal Telecom Circle

Table –V.13
Distribution of Telephone Connections (Land) and S.T.D. Booths in the Urban Areas of this District

Sl. No.	Name of the Town	Number Of Households	Number of Land connections	Household Connections (%)	Connections of Local PCO	Number of STD Booths
1	Cooch Behar	15997	10265	64.2	88	247
2	Dinhata	7249	6027	83.1	14	104
3	Mathabhanga	4755	2615	55.0	3	57
4	Tufanganj	4135	3280	79.3	18	94
5	Mekhliganj	1821	620	34.0	—	20
6	Khagrabari	2565	1665	73.5	8	50
7	Guriahati	2475	1620	65.5	3	20

Source: TDM Cooch Behar Telecom Directory.

in the urban areas of Koch Bihar district viz. Cooch Behar (COB), Dinhata (DTA), Mathabhanga (MTG), Tufanganj (TFG), Mekhliganj (MKG), Khagrabari (KGB) and Guriahati (GHT). There is no Telephone Exchange in Haldibari, Kharimala Khagrabari and Bhangri Pratham Khanda.

DISTRIBUTION OF LAND CONNECTIONS

Among seven towns having telephone exchanges of this district highest number of telephone connections is to be found in Cooch Behar accounting to 10,265 connections including domestic, commercial, industrial and others followed by Dinhata (6027), Tufanganj (3280) and Mathabhanga (2615), Khagrabari and Guriahati accounts above

1600 connections. But Mekhliganj has lowest number of telephone connections comprising only 620 land phone connections.

Table V.14
Distribution of Land Connections by Category
in Different Towns of Cooch Behar District

Sl. No.	Category	Number of Connections	Number of Towns	Name of the Town
1	Maximum	Above 10000	1	Cooch Behar
2	Medium	5000 – 10000	1	Dinhata
3	Low	1000 – 4999	4	Tufanganj, Mathbhanga, Khagrabari, Guriahati
4	Very Low	Below 1000	1	Mekhliganj

DISTRIBUTION OF LAND CONNECTIONS BY CATEGORY

Distribution of land connections is classified into the following four categories:

- *Maximum Connections* : This type of maximum land connections of over 10,000 is to be found in Koch Bihar which accounts 10,265 land connections including domestic, commercial, industrial and other connections.
- *Medium Connections* : The town Dinhata is included in this type of medium land connections of 5000–10000 connections. Dinhata recorded 6027 numbers of land connections including domestic, commercial, industrial and others.
- *Low Connections* : In the urban areas of this district low Connections of 1000-4999 are to be found in four towns viz. Tufanganj (3280), Mathabhanga (2615), Khagrabari (1665) and Guriahati (1620).
- *Very Low Connections* : In the urban areas of this district only Mekhliganj town has low number of land phone Connections comprising only 620 Connections including domestic, commercial, industrial and others

DISTRIBUTION OF LOCAL PCO AND STD BOOTHS IN THE URBAN AREAS OF THIS DISTRICT:

Seven towns viz Cooch Behar, Dinhata, Mathabhanga, Makhliganj, Khagrabari and Guriahati along with seven telephone exchanges have launched 134 local PCO and 572 STD booths. The highest number of STD booths are to be found in Koch Bihar comprising 247 booths and 88 local PCO followed by Dinhata and Tufanganj which accounts 104 and 14 and 94 and 18 STD booth and local PCO respectively. It is to be

noted that in Mekhliganj there is no local PCO where only 10 STD booths are to be found.

Table – V.15
Distribution of STD Booths By Category
in Urban Areas of Koch Bihar District

Sl. No.	Category	Number of STD Booths	Number of Towns	Name of the Town
1	Maximum	Above 200	1	Cooch Behar
2	Medium	100 – 200	1	Dinhata
3	Low	50 – 99	3	Tufanganj, Mathabhanga, Khagrabari,
4	Very Low	Below 50	2	Mekhliganj, Guriahati

Table – V.15.A
Distribution of STD Booths By Category
in Urban Areas of Koch Bihar District

Sl. No.	Name of the Town	Population	Number of STD Booths	Population Serves/ STD Booth
1	Cooch Behar	76812	247	310
2	Dinhata	34303	104	329
3	Mathabhanga,	21110	57	370
4	Tufanganj,	19293	94	205
5	Mekhliganj,	10833	20	541
6	Khagrabari,	19762	50	395
7	Guriahati	18896	20	944

In the urban areas of this district the STD booths are classified into four categories viz.

- *Maximum Distribution* : In this category only Cooch Behar is included comprising 247 STD booths.
- *Medium Distribution* : Dinhata town is included in this category comprising 104 number of STD booths.
- *Low Distribution* : Three towns viz. Tufanganj (94), Mathabhanga (57) and Khagrabari (50) have included in this type of low distribution of STD booths.
- *Very Low Distribution* : Mekhliganj (10) and Guriahati (10) have included in this type of very low distribution of STD booth connections.

In this district not only BSNL network has been launched. Today in this district cellular mobile connections of Airtel, Reliance, Hutch, Tata Indicom, Aircel, Rim etc.

have launched their network in every town of this district very rapidly. They also serve life time mobile services and other opportunities compared to BSNL.

V.5. MEDICAL AND PUBLIC HEALTH

Urban health in developing countries has destructive characteristics. There are communicable diseases on one hand and proliferation of non-communicable diseases, triggered by urbanization and industrialization on the other. This dual characteristic complicates the health scenario. Added to this is the fact that much of the natural environment which contributes to the aetiological factors of disease is lost or replaced by a man-made environment. While the physical stress factors of the natural environment are buffered, both communicable and degenerative diseases thrive under a new system of bio-social interaction.

The district of Koch Bihar is no exception, in fact it portrays every aspects of bio-social control complicated in recent years by the impact of man induced health hazards. Most of the public hospitals of this district with the exception of few private Nursing homes and clinics are not in a position to provide adequate services to the people attracted from the adjoining areas or peripheries. So, the higher income bracket prefer to seek Medicare in private nursing homes and from private medical practitioners that are not properly recorded. The location of different towns of this district along with so many rivers, ponds or dighis, marshes, though strategically and agriculture and commercially justified was not ideal from human habitation point of view. Since its inception the district faced the onslaught of epidemics of cholera, malaria, small pox and other communicable diseases.

The unprecedented growth of population brought in its wake a gradual deterioration of infrastructural facilities leading to considerable social disorganization and maladjustment. The deterioration of the urban landscape being evident in the proliferation of slums, chronic housing shortage, inadequate sewerage system, shortfall of water supply, overcrowded public transport system, poor district and State High ways, soaring land prices, occasional power failure, unemployment, inadequate medical and educational facilities and increase of hazards from water, air and noise pollution on one hand; the poor sanitation and water supply, floods, water logging resulted in endemicity of water borne diseases, on the other hand. Congestion along with decrease in open space created conditions for the proliferation of respiratory diseases.

HEALTH CARE FACILITIES : The health care facilities of this district had a historical tradition. Before the year 1819, the system of allopathic medicine was unknown in Koch Bihar. The Rajas of Koch Bihar had from the early times 'Kabiraja' or Aurvedic physicians. But this form of treatment was confined to the royal family and to the upper classes. It did not penetrate the masses that by a large had faith in Ojhas or village quaks. But there was no attempt to open any dispensary or hospital before Col. Haughton took over charge of the administration during the minority of Maharaja Nripendra Narayan. In

1865, the first dispensary was opened at Cooch Behar. It was a humble establishment, partly supported by local subscriptions. Accordingly other dispensaries were opened at Dinhata (1873), Mathabhanga (1874), Haldibari (1885) and Tufanganj (1898). The in-patient and out-patient treatment was started at these dispensaries or hospitals. These dispensaries and hospitals were established at the state headquarters and at the sub-divisional headquarters and were visited by the people of the towns and those living close by.

At present out of 10 hospitals in this district 8 are in the urban areas. Out of 8 hospitals 2 in Koch Bihar, 2 in Tufanganj, 1 in Dinhata, 1 in Mathabhanga and 1 in Mekhliganj Municipal towns. These hospitals are classified into District hospitals (Koch Bihar), Sub-divisional hospitals (Tufanganj, Mathabhanga, Dinhata, Mekhliganj) and rural hospitals or sub-centres (Haldibary, Koch Bihar).

So, in the urban areas of this district, there are 28 medical institutions (8 hospitals + 20 clinics) with 971 beds, 110 doctors and mushrooming growth of private nursing homes, clinics and diagnostic centers, many of these are unregistered.

Table –V.16
Medical Institutions in the District of Koch Bihar 2003

Sl. No.	Name of the Town/Municipality	Medical Institutions			Total Bed	Doctor
		Hospital	Clinic	Total		
1	Mekhliganj	1	4	5	120	12
2	Haldibari	1	1	2	30	5
3	Mathabhanga	1	4	5	120	14
4	Cooch Behar	2	4	6	410	42
5	Tufanganj	2	3	5	110	14
6	Dinhata	1	4	5	181	23
	Total	8	20	28	971	110
	District Total	10	22	80	1400	180

Table – V.17

Patient Treated in Hospitals and Clinics in the District of Koch Bihar 2003

Sl. No.	Name of the Town/Municipality	Indoor	Outdoor	Total	Doctor-Patient Ratio	Bed-Patient Ratio
1	Mekhliganj	1228	3567	4795	399.6	40.0
2	Haldibari	1082	3398	4480	896.0	149.3
3	Mathabhanga	24794	404253	429047	30646.2	3575.4
4	Coochbehar	44126	408386	452512	10774.1	1103.7
5	Tufanganj	31054	404127	435181	31084.4	3956.2
6	Dinhata	32068	405268	437336	19014.6	2416.2
	District Total	144661	1655747	1800408	10002.3	1286.0

* Source: 1. Dy. Chief Medical Officer of Health

2. Super/Director of the respective (L.S.G./Private) hospitals, Koch Bihar.

* Calculated by the Author.

The health care facility of this district reflects a dichotomy in pattern and utilization, with the sophisticated treatment facilities available for those who can afford the expenses and lack of even the basic amenities for the urban poor in the hospitals of this district.

Table – V.18

Distribution of Hospitals by Size and Bed Capacities in Koch Bihar District 2003

Bed Strength	Number of Hospital	Percentage	Total Number of Beds	Percentage
Below 60	1	16.6	30	3.09
61-110	1	16.7	110	11.33
111-170	2	33.3	240	24.72
171-230	1	16.7	181	18.64
Above 230	1	16.7	410	42.22
Total	6	100.00	971	100.00

The town Mekhliganj has one bed / 40 people which is in Haldibari one bed /149 people, in Mathabhanga one bed / 3575 people, in Cooch Behar one bed /1103 people, in Tufanganj one bed /3956 people and in Dinhata one bed / 2416 people. In Mekhliganj one doctor treated 399 patients, which is 896 patients per doctor, in Haldibari 3064 patients per doctor in Mathabhanga, 10774 patients per doctor in Cooch Behar, 31084 patient per doctor in Tufanganj and 19014 patient treated by one doctor in Dinhata.

Among six municipal towns of this district over 80 percent (83.4%) of the district's urban hospitals have less than 200 beds each. Hence they can offer only 57.78 percent district's urban health service. However, this can be improved if the turnover rate of beds can be increased. This calls for improved diagnostic and treatment facilities. But the entire system operates on a lackadaisical.

The sub-divisional hospitals of this district lack basic diagnostic facilities they serve only the local population and its peripheries population for minor ailments. On the other hand, the district hospital (the then Maharaja Jitendra Narayan Hospital) of over 400 beds strength control 42.22 percent of total bed capacity of the urban areas of this district.

Most of these hospitals are over a century old and were designed to serve fewer patients. Having expanded manifold, they are unable to keep pace with demand and hence the quality of services have declined. Often a single bed is shared among two or more patients. At present the out patient departments of Mathablianga, Cooch Behar, Tufanganj and Dinhatra each render service to about above 1000 patients each day.

Not only these hospitals lack modern equipments and diagnostic facilities (only exception District Hospital) but they suffer from inadequacy of trained and experienced manpower. As such the work culture has deteriorated. In many case X-ray, electrocardiogram (E.C.G.) and other machines that do exist are outdated, over used and or have become nonfunctional. Repair and replacement involves long bureaucratic and administrative procedure. This results in considerable delay in diagnosis and treatment which escalates the cost incurred by the patients. Moreover, medicines are in short supply and of inferior quality. Except District Hospital Blood Bank are not present, trained technicians and nurses are overworked or engaged in unproductive administrative work. The result is total chaos, inefficiency and incompetence. There is least co-ordination to maintain basic hygiene.

Basic change in health care outlook required along with streamlining of hospital administration, loosening of bureaucratic control, improvement of hygiene, water supply and sanitation. Positive improvement might be expected from re-distribution of beds and specialized doctors in sub-divisional hospitals where diagnostic and treatment facilities could be standardized and improved.

Table – V.19
Family Welfare Centres in the District of Koch Bihar 2003.

Sl. No.	Name of the Town	Family Welfare Centres			Cases treated		
		Public	Private	Total	Vasec	Tubectomy	I.U.D.
1	Mekhliganj	1	—	1	—	206	47
2	Haldibari	1	—	1	—	7	5
3	Mathabhanga	1	—	1	—	18	55
4	Coochbehar	1	6	7	—	879	70
5	Tufanganj	1	1	2	—	42	49
6	Dinhata	1	2	3	1	306	57
	Total	6	9	15	1	1458	283
	District Total	18	9	27	127	10647	3455

Source: Dy. Chief Medical Officer & Health, District Family Welfare Office, Super/Director of respective (L.G.S./Private Hospitals) Cooch Behar.

Table – V. 20
Achievement of Universal Immunization
Programme in the District of Koch Bihar 2003

Sl. No.	Name of the Town/municipality	NUMBERS				
		TT (P.W.)	D.P.T.	POLIO	BCG	Measles
1	Mekhliganj	337	293	281	344	293
2	Haldibari	625	711	197	573	830
3	Mathabhanga	749	596	596	868	588
4	Cooch Behar	923	1147	1070	2994	1122
5	Tufanganj	516	386	373	1602	446
6	Dinhata	753	745	724	2440	610
	District Total	52360	55662	54871	63422	53033

Source : i.) Dy. C.M.OH (III Cooch Behar)
ii.) Demographic and Evaluation Cell, District F. W. Bureau, Cooch Beha

FAMILY WELFARE CENTRES : In the municipal towns of this district at present there are 15 urban family welfare centers including 6 public and 9 public centers. Number of family welfare centers is highest in number in Cooch Behar which accounts service including one public and six private welfare centers. The cases treated in this welfare centers are Vasec, tubectomy and I.U.D. tomy. Some permanent and some part-time workers are engaged in this public health services within the local areas of this district. The case of Tubectomy is recorded highest in number in Cooch Behar (8790, followed by Dinhata 93060 and Mekhliganj 92060. The case vasec is only treated in Dinhata Sub-Divisional Hospital. The I.U.D. tomy is highest number in Cooch Behar (70) followed by Dinhata (57) and Mathabhanga (55).

The district has launched successfully universal immunization of Tetanus Toxoid (T.T.PW), Diphtheria Pertussi's Tetanus (D.P.T.) Bacilic Calmetto Guerin (B.C.G.), Polio and Measles vaccination programmes. Number of TT (PW) vaccination is highest in Cooch Behar which accounts 923 followed by Mathabhanga (749) and Dinhata (753). Number of DPT vaccination is highest in Cooch Behar which accounts 1147 followed by Dinhata (745) and Haldibari, (711). Number of Polio vaccination is highest in Coochbehar (1070) followed by Dinhata (724) and Mathabhanga (596). In case of B.C.G. vaccination Cooch Behar ranks highest (2994) followed by Dinhata (2440) and Tufanganj (1602). Finally number of Measles vaccination is highest in Cooch Behar (1122) followed by Haldibari (830) and Dinhata (610).

Table –V.21
Distribution of Towns by Category
on the basis of Universal Immuniazation Programme

Category	Number of Vaccination	NAME OF THE TOWNS				
		TT (PW)	DPT	Polio	B.C.G.	Measles
Very High	Above 2000	—	—	—	CoochBehar Dinhata;	—
High	1500—999	—	—	—	Tufanganj,	—
Medium	1000—1499	—	CoochBehar	Cooch Behar	—	Cooch Behar
Low	500—999	Cooch Behar, Dinhata, Mathabhanga, Haldibari, Tufanganj	Dinhata, Haldibari, Matha- bhanga	Dinhata, Matha- bhanga	Matha- bhanga, Haldibari	Haldibari Dinhata, Mathabhanga
Very Low	Below 500	Mekhliganj	Tufanganj, Mekhliganj	Tufanganj, Mekhliganj, Haldibari	Mekhliganj	Tufanganj, Mekhliganj

Arranged by Author

The achievement of Universal immunization programme in six municipal towns of Koch Bihar district is classified by the following category:

- *Very High:* This type of above 2000 imunization programmes achieved. Cooch Behar and Dinhata Municipal town only in case of B.C.G. programmes.
- *High:* This type of 1500-1999 vaccination programmes has launched successfully only Tufanganj municipal town in case of B.C.G.
- *Medium:* The medium number of vaccination programme of 1000-1499 has launched only Cooch Behar municipal town (District Hospital) in case of DPT, Polio and Measles.
- *Low :* This low number of vaccination of 500-999 have launched Cooch Behar, Dinhata, Mathabhanga, Haldibari and Tufanganj in case of TT(PW); Dinhata,

Haldibari and Mathabhanga in case of DPT; Dinjata and Mathabhanga in case of Polio; Mathabhanga and Haldibari in case of B.C.G.; Haldibari, Dinjata and Mathabhanga in case of Measles.

- *Very Low*: This type of very low vaccination programme is to be found in Mekhliganj {TT (PW), DPT, Polio, and B.C.G. Measles}, Tufanganj (DPT, Polio, and Measles) and Haldibari (Polio) Municipality.

In general among six municipal towns Mekhliganj and Tufanganj have launched very low immunization programme successfully (2003)

V.6. GUESTHOUSE & HOTELS

In the early days, Koch Bihar did not have much to attract tourists. The only place of real interest is the old capital and palace in Cooch Behar town and fort of Kamatapur at Gosanimari and Gosanimari Temple near Dinjata. There were no Dharmashalas and well to do hotels in this district. Still now the following are the State owned Circuit House and Inspection Bungalow.

RECENT EXISTING TOURIST FACILITIES

With the passage of time due to the beautification of Palace, Sagardighi, construction of Rajbari Echo heritage Park, attraction of Rashik Bil and other attractions and development of trade and commerce, number of guest houses maintained by the six municipalities and same Indian style hotels developed in this district for lodging, meeting, conference and other social and cultural purposes.

Table -V.22
State Owned Circuit House and Inspection
Bungalows in Different Towns of Koch Bihar District

Sl. No.	Location	Description	Controlling Authority
1	Cooch Behar	Circuit House	Deputy Commissioner
		Inspection Bungalow	Deputy Commissioner
2	Dinjata	Dak Bungalow	Sub-Divisional Officer
		Inspection Bungalow	Executive Engineer (P.W.D.)
3	Mathabhanga	Dak Bungalow	Sub-Divisional Officer
		Inspection Bungalow	Executive Engineer (P.W.D.)
4	Tufanganj	Dak Bungalow	Sub-Divisional Officer
		Inspection Bungalow	Executive Engineer (P.W.D.)
5	Mekhliganj	Dak Bungalow	Sub-Divisional Officer
6	Haldibari	Inspection Bungalow	Executive Engineer (P.W.D.)

Table –V.23
Municipality-Owned and Private Guest Houses in the District

Sl. No.	Name of the town	Description	Authority
1	Cooch Behar	Pantha Nibas	Municipality
		Prabas Abason	Municipality
		Chila Roy Abason	Municipality
		Atithi Nibas	Zila Parishad
		Transport Guest House	N.B.S.T.C.
		AnandaMargi Dharmashala	Private
		Maheswari Bhawan	Private
		Anil Bhawan	Private
		Shree Agrasen Bhawan	Private
		Gour Mahal	Private
		Saha Palace	Private
2	Tufanganj	Abahan	Municipality
		Dinantika	Panchayat Samity
3	Dinhata	Apan ghar	Municipality
4	Mathabhanga	Kichukshan	Municipality
5	Haldibari	Prantik	Municipality
6	Mekhliganj	Market Complex Guest House	Municipality

At present, due to the tourist attraction and development of trade and commerce in this district, in the district headquarter and some of the towns some Indian style hotels developed. viz. in Cooch Behar municipal town, Town Hotel, B. D. Hotel, Hotel C. B., Hotel Chittaranjan, Hotel Maruti, Hotel Mayur, Hotel Micado, Hotel Sarbasree, Hotel Elora, Hotel Tourist, Cooch Behar Hotel, Tripti Hotel, New Ashok Hotel, Prantik Hotel, Park Hotel, Shanti Hotel, Central Hotel, Kamal Hotel, Trinath Hotel, Yuvaraj Hotel, Sandhya Hotel, Hotel Royal Palace; in Tufanganj Municipal town, Hotel Raj Mahal; in Dinhata municipal town, Hotel Priya and Hotel Nataraj etc. These hotels have the capacity of both fooding and lodging. In all other towns the hotel facility for lodging is very least number .The travelers and tourists are like to stay either on municipality owned private guest houses due to minimum rent or in the hotels of the district headquarters.

Besides, in the district headquarters and some of the towns of this district there are some travel agencies which operate different package tour for local and long distance travel all over India. At the very recent, N.B.S.T.C. have initiated a package tour per a week from Cooch Behar through Rashik Bil, Rajabhat Khaoa, Jayanti via Baneswar to Cooch Behar.

Table –V.24
Progress in Tourism in the District of Koch Bihar

Year	Number of Vehicles	Number of Trips	Number of Tourist	No. of Tourist staying in Tourist Lodge	Total Earnings (000)
1999-2000	—	—	—	2850	623.23
2000-2001	—	—	—	2032	497.40
2001-2002	2	2160	12601	1738	600.00
2002-2003	2	2190	12684	2328	620.28
2003-2004	—	—	—	1851	272.00

Source : 1. Divisional Forest Officer, Cooch Behar Division
2. Dy. Range Manager, Rashik Bil, Bauxa (L) Div. W.B.F.D.C.

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